16: Evans-Pritchard E-5 (1931, 1936) 1956
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him how to pound millet so that he now satisfies his hunger only by ceaseless labour. The sexual organs attached themselves to man and woman so that they are now constantly desirous of each other. Mouse taught man how to beget and woman how to bear. Dog brought fire to man. And we are told that while fox was plotting to sow dissension among the beasts he gave man the spear and taught him how to use it. It was then that man began to kill, and his first killing seems to have been that of the mother of cow and buffalo, or rather the mother of cattle, for at that time cows and buffaloes were the same. This led to a feud between men and cattle, buffaloes avenging their mother by attacking men in the bush and cows by causing men to quarrel and slay one another.

It may perhaps sharpen our focus on sacrifice to know not only that Nuer seldom kill wild animals but also that they can imagine a state in which man did not kill, that there might have been a beginning to killing as to coitus, to pounding grain, and to other things men do now. Viewed in relation to the dialectic of the stories, the killing of cattle is then seen not to be, as it were, derived from a state of nature in which men kill animals for food, as just one sort of killing among others, but as a product of a new dispensation in which cattle are allotted a sacrificial role and are set apart for this purpose. Other animals may, as a matter more or less of chance, and now and again, be killed, but it is the role and destiny of cattle to be slaughtered in sacrifice. Sacrificial slaughter thus stands at the very centre of the idea of killing, and sacrificial flesh at the very centre of the idea of feasting.

We may conclude, therefore, that the observations we have made earlier concerning the relationship of a man with his favourite ox, the ritual of initiation, &c., must be viewed in the light of the identification of men with cattle in sacrifices. A Nuer does not look upon his cattle as a stockbreeder or dairy farmer does, for in his case his relationship to his beasts is complicated, apart from their use in marriage, by their reservation for sacrifice. And it is not just that he must not kill cattle except in sacrifice because if he were to slaughter them for meat he would lower his resources for food, marriage, and religious purposes. It is not merely a negative injunction. It is not 'thou must not kill' but 'thou must sacrifice'. It is not that they must only kill for sacrifice but that they must sacrifice to kill.

We must not be led astray by this conclusion to suppose that in